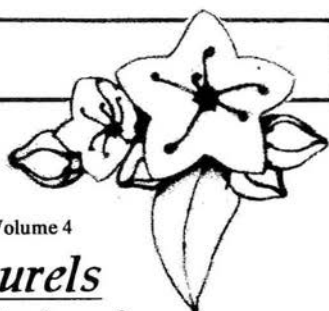




SPRING 1998 VOLUME 4
Mountain Laurels



Spring 1998

Volume 4

Mountain Laurels

**The Student Literary Review of
North Georgia College and State University**

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Editor's Note

I never intended to be editor of Mountain Laurels. I hesitated when Dr. Robinson and Dr. Archibald offered me the position. I knew the work would be tremendous, the hours long, the tasks frustrating.

I did, however, finally accept, and, true to my premonition, the production of Mountain Laurels taxed my mind and caused me to mutter not a few epithets. One day I even found myself plotting my escape from the position of editor.

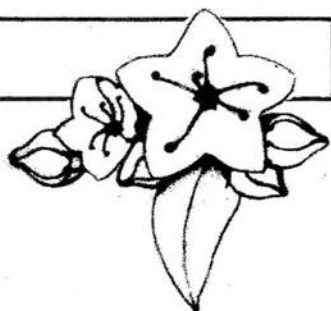
But Mountain Laurels eventually emerged triumphant. While I was lost in the thick of submissions and assignment delegations, I could not see the beauty of the work which was taking shape. I could not see, as I can now, that the seemingly futile efforts of the Mountain Laurels staff were actually leading to a worthy representation of this university's creative bent.

Now I wonder at my original hesitation to take on a feat so mammoth as Mountain Laurels. What better cause could I have forwarded than this annual compilation of students' imaginations? North Georgia College and State University possesses so much more than a thriving military program and foreboding English classes. This university infuses in students what is at the very heart of a decent liberal arts education—the ability to think for oneself. This ability assumes the shape of written and visual art, art which is nowhere captured as well as within the pages of Mountain Laurels.

This year we received nearly 200 submissions in prose and poetry alone. This deluge of art—art from the students here at NGCSU—proved to me that the university needs and deserves a literary review. I only hope that those of you who are fortunate enough to find a copy of the review will also see the necessity of this modest little book. Inside are the truths and beauty which students have attempted to harness, if only for a brief click of the camera or a few stanzas of blank verse. Inside is a revelation perhaps of what it means to be human. And these expressions came from our own school, our own NGCSU.

I feel incredibly lucky and indebted to everyone for the editorship which allowed me to see the beauty of Mountain Laurels. After you read this slim volume, I hope you will feel lucky and indebted, too.

-Andrea Conarro



Dedication

A Sick Boy From Home (excerpt)

How can I feel but that I've found
A lasting bond of brothers—
A band that's true, brave, good and sound,
And much esteemed above all others.

There is a page in mem'ry's album,
'Twill always be most dear to me;
On it is writ, in ink indelible,
The students' names N.G.A.C.

Let us so live that we shall never
Fear the harbinger of death,
But when life's brittle cord shall sever
In peace we'll draw our final breath.

W. F. Jones

March 1883

*Assistant Adjutant, Corps of Cadets
North Georgia Agricultural College*

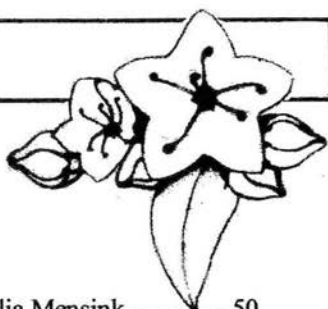
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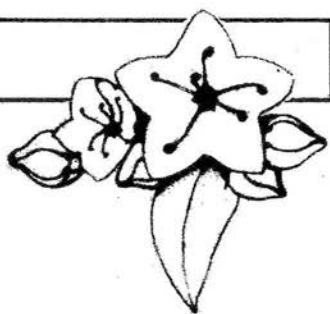
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The Birth of the Ancient Mariner

The Mariner has wandered now
From restless year to year,
His glistening eye entrapping those
Who've yet his tale to hear.

Upon a rarely trodded path
A toiler made his way;
The bright-eyed Mariner
approached
And beckoned time of day.

The former took his hand and
smiled,
"Peace to you, my friend."
The latter said, "I have a tale.
Please hear me to the end."

The Mariner began to speak
Of horror, death and fear;
As in a trance he told the words
That many yet did hear.

As unlike any to me before,
His eyes, bright, strained to hold
The listener in their steely grasp;
Their powers had run cold.

"Wait, please stop," the toiler said,
"You need not further go;
Your tale is one related me
Ages now ago.

"My father told me of your plight
And timeless debt you pay.
It seems he met you long ago,
'Though where I cannot say."

The Mariner, aghast, unnerved,
His captive powers failed,
Recognized his first defeat.

Since the day he sailed.

He tried to turn, the toiler flee,
But found himself instead
Frozen by the listener's stare,
His footsteps ground in lead.

"What is the role you play in life?"
The dim-eyed sailor cried.
"How do you aver the glare
That every man has tied?"

"Have no fear," the toiler said,
"I come to you in peace.
I come with absolution, and
I carry your release.

"The years of toil now are through;
Your restless heart may slow.
Your message has been given
And now you freely go."

"The message that I bring for them,
No longer may it wait,
Must be heard above all else
Before the time is late."

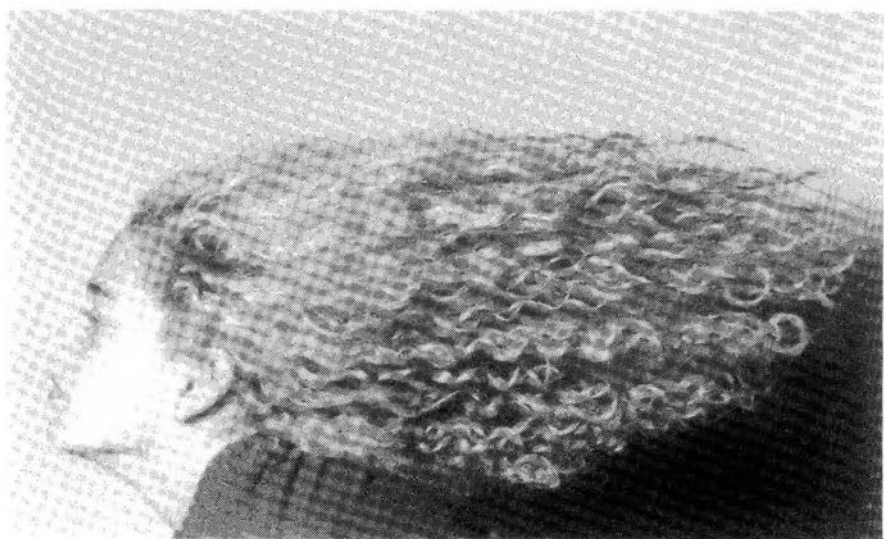
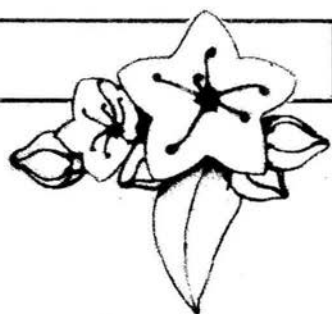
A peace fell on the Mariner
The binding thread was torn.
He lay his body softly down
And dying, he was born.

-Pam Browning

At Church

Love-lorn I stared
 At the moon
 Until I saw your
 Face, and for me,
 The stars faded
 And the sky melted,
 Dripping wax onto
 Wooden tables as
 We held hands and
 Listened with rapt
 Attention to Keith's
 Version of God, which
 Was quite similar
 To mine in ways.
 I looked at you
 And you smiled,
 Knowing my thoughts
 Were sinful and I'm
 Not yet saved.
 But you squeezed
 My hand as I played
 With hot wax from
 Candles, loving me
 More because of it.

-Kasi Whitaker

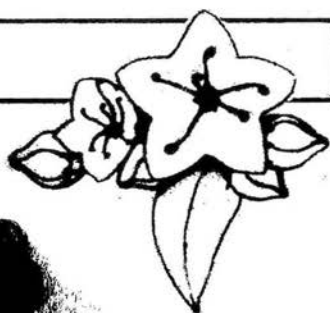
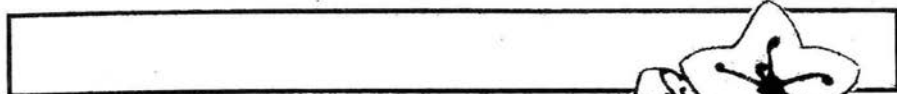


Untitled
-Julia Mensink

I Was Cooking One Day...

I was cooking one day,
My hair was up
but wisps had escaped
around my ears.
You came in and smoothed
them back.
It was such a simple,
sweet thing.
But it meant the world
to me.
Such a gentle touch
I've never felt.
Look.
They've escaped again.

-Christi Dayton Queen



Rose
-Cory Truelove

this is the turning point

never thought we'd get so far apart
like right now, sitting here next to you.
i always sit in the passenger seat
fiddling with the radio.

evidently the President is
sleeping around and lying to the entire Nation.
i know that i love you,
i just can't stand liking you
i hate the cheap air freshener in your car
it makes it too hard to breathe
and it doesn't smell like flowers at all.

i gave up about six weeks ago,
i stopped kissing you two weeks ago,
we haven't hugged in five days,
neither of us has smiled in months.
i don't know how to tell you,
but i know you know.

and i know - you know - i know.

i don't want to talk.
i don't want to hear my voice.
i envy your honesty in hopes
to keep my trust--
and i trust you'll
let me off at my house
to walk out in silence.

-Rick Church



Untitled
-Bobby and Karen Hall

Tomorrow Was Yesterday

Honest. That is what many people who know me would describe me as being. Of course I've told the occasional white lie, or maybe I didn't tell the cashier at the local store that she had given me too much change, but overall "honest" would be a good word. I'm proud of my honesty--not that it's done me much good. Many times in my life I would have benefited financially if I had taken the easier path, and I sure could use it now.

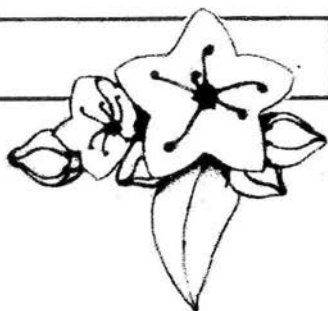
At the age of thirty-five, I find that I am alone and near broke. My parents are dead, and I was never fortunate enough to have brothers or sisters. Love dealt me an unlucky hand as well. I have no children, steady girlfriend, or longing admirers. No, I was a humble man in looks as well as in deed. Save for two small fish, I am alone. Only my determination of being honest will be remembered in my passing, and now, I am at the crossroads.

As I stare through my open doorway in the dimly lit hall, I see a television lying innocently at my feet. From where it came I do not know, and from whom is a grand mystery to me. Moments before had I heard the knock that had forced me to answer the beckoning of this device. Not quite sure how to react, I stared down the stained flesh-colored corridors for some resemblance of life, but to no avail. Thinking to myself that someone must have stolen it, I brought it into the kitchen and set it on the small wooden table. I was tempted to plug it in, for I had no television of my own, but I knew the right thing to do was to call the police, so I dialed. As the tone of the phone rang monotonously into my ear, I froze. It was soft at first, and I couldn't tell if my ears were growing accustomed to it, or if I was getting louder, but the voice of a young woman could be heard, and it came from the kitchen table.

I dropped the phone in utter fear as I stared at the possessed television. On the screen was the news report that appeared normal, save for one queer detail: the date was wrong. The caption in the side stated that it was the sixth, when I was positive it was the fifth. I watched the news in amazement as the anchor woman told the top story in a very impersonal matter-of-fact way. She stated that there had been an explosion in a deli at 12:30; as the picture flashed over the screen I saw that it was the shop across the street from where I worked. The anchor woman paused, the television went blank, and I passed out.

I awoke the next morning running late for work; as I darted out the door I took a quick glance into the kitchen to see if I had been dreaming, but the luminous black box was still there. I left, cursing myself, for this could not be true, yet as the day dragged on, the broadcast played over and over in my mind, only to be disturbed by the explosion at the deli across the street. Only then was I truly aware of what I was dealing with, and only then was I truly afraid.

That night as I sat in front of the blank screen I began to ponder all the good that could be done with this tool. All of the murders that could be stopped, all of the accidents that could be prevented, and, finally, all of the money that

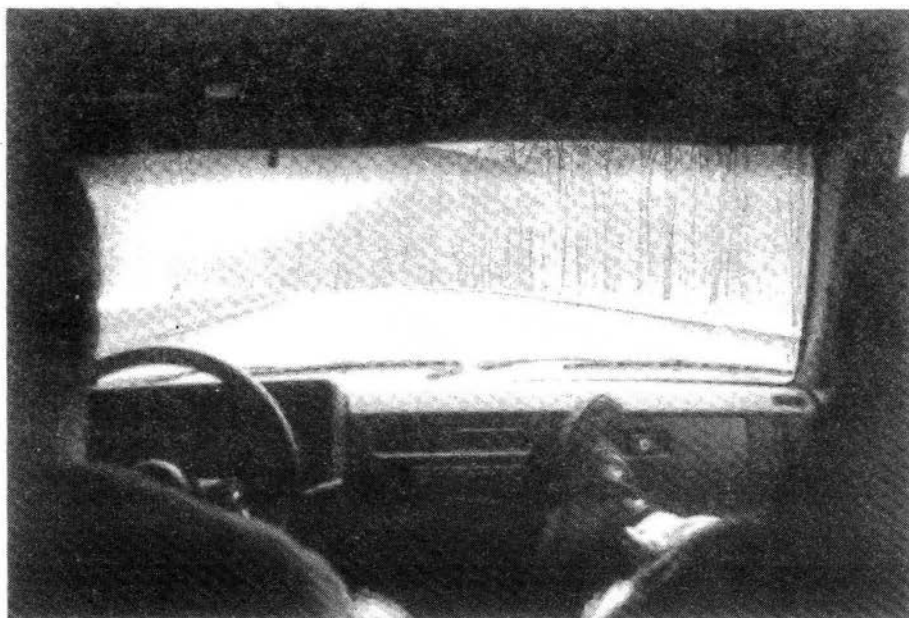


could be made. At that precise moment, the television flickered, and a voice said, "Tonight a local man won the million dollar lotto jackpot with the lucky numbers 10-32-16-13 and..." The television went black, and I sat stunned. I had three dollars to my name, and that night they were given to the cashier of a gas station for three tickets. The next day I discovered that the final number was 24. Unfortunately, that was not the number that I had chosen, but I knew I would still get some money, and I wanted more.

That night I watched the empty television for seven hours, afraid to leave my apartment, afraid to move. Around three in the morning, I fell asleep, only to awake with what I thought was my reflection in the confined screen, but I soon realized that it was not my reflection, but a picture of me. As fear crawled up my spine the announcer calmly said, "A local man was found brutally murdered today at...", and the screen went dead.

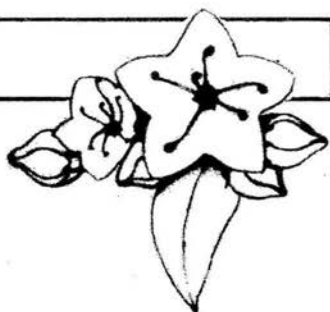
Now, I wait. Afraid to leave my apartment, afraid to move, afraid of when it will come and how it will happen. I just sit. I stare into the blank screen and dissect the distorted reflection and ponder; what will people say about me. I hope that they remember me as honest.

-Justin O. Shelton



Untitled

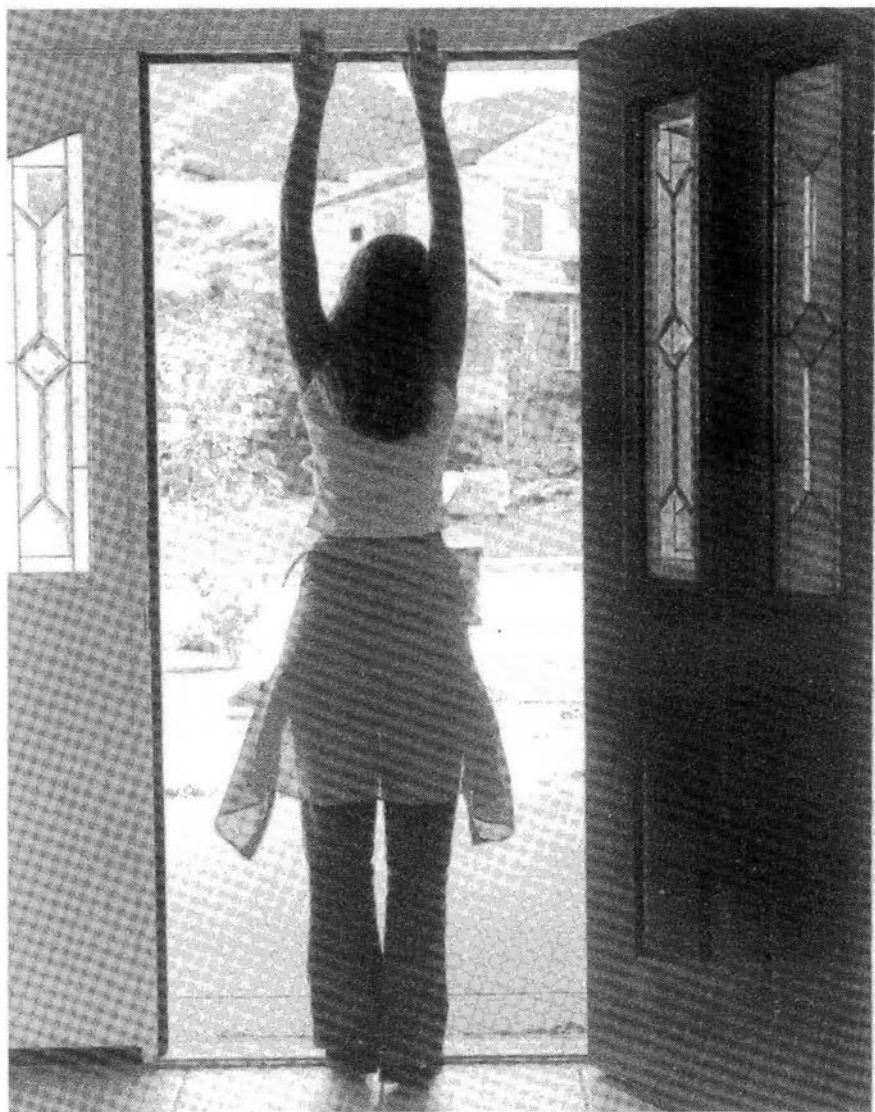
- Michael Deems



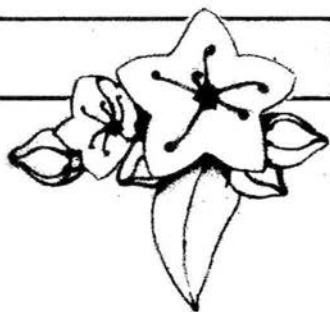
Similitude 20

On seacoast dunes each culm deforms
Beneath the gale's obstrep'rous hand.
As vanguards of the terra firm,
These grasses tame the shifting sand
Within their marquissette of roots.
Appearing singular, each shoot
Is bound by rhizomes to its neighbor
Securing what they need for life
Supporting one another's labor.
The sea, irascible, is loathe
To find a parapet of sand
Restraining its tide-driven scope.
But 'neath a hurricane's command,
The saline swells invade the dunes
And plunder any grain of sand
Not guarded by the grasses roots.
The soldiers of this garrison,
Despite the lattice they construct
By gripping one another in
A mutual embrace of roots,
May find their strength to no avail.
Their steadfastness may bring them death
By violence of the wave or gale.
The dunes would melt beneath the breath
(their garrison depleted thus)
Of raging sea at war with land.
The dying grasses then entrust
Irony, to their slayer's hand
Their seeds, their offspring, which take flight
Upon the sea-swells and the wind.
On other dunes they'll sprout and fight,
A fight on which those dunes depend.

-Ryan Wagner



On Top of the Salt Lake Valley
-Rick Church



Pretense

O, silent city of the dead
Sleeping in your hallowed beds,
Underneath those shapeless stones,
Rest your tired and settled bones.

Water's smoothed your epitaph,
Storms have rent your shepherd's staff.
So erodes your catacomb,
So time molests your final home.

Deep inside the ground you lie,
Unnoticed by those driving by
Who deny that they will, too,
Soon be as cold and stiff as you.

But you're not burdened by life's pain.
You feel no cold and taste no rain,
And beneath this stone you've placed no trust,
Not the immortal, but the dust.

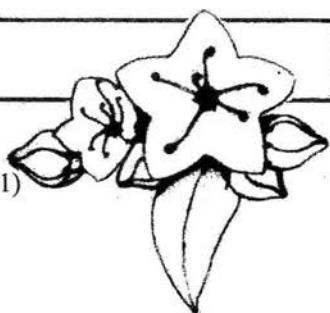
-Kelly Leach



His True Love
-Terese Pauksta

In Memory of Raymond Andrews

(1934-1991)



1.

Our restless country shifts in its ice,
Old friend. A January once more holds
Me near the fires where black cats roll
Up and over for a stretch. I bless
That idleness and the letters of your name,
Sink in dreams to your cool reef,
Then rise against it. That laughter
Has me waiting, for you might come here
Once more with beer and magazines
To my front door, all shades of delight.

2.

I shook your soft hand that June
Near Madison Square Garden. You wanted
To spring for Irish coffee, but I left
You and went up in the Penta twelve floors
To bed. We might have gone back
To O' Reilly's, as we did years before,
And drunk all night. You slipped
Past me down that last sidewalk,
Rolling gait, no capacity for enduring
The brotherhood of our failures, tired
Beyond the traffic and the tearing light.

3.

I want to bless that turning away,
Its fatal separation, shake milkweed
To stir our country alchemy; thaw
The night back and go from there.
I want you to sponge that last meal
Off Margaret, have you lead the crew
From Maria's south down the sidewalk,
Ray. I want to change my mind now.
I will go with you for Irish coffee
And chart our Southern lives toward home.

4.

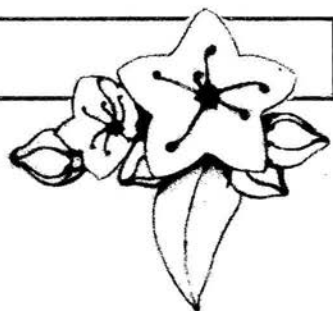
All that last night you wrote notes
For the disposition of your manuscripts, books,

When autumn had come gold and red
 Back to Georgia. You took the weave of age,
 Spread that uneven tapestry half across
 Your house in the woods. You came
 Past old lapses, memories of baseball,
 Funny-paper stories from the Thirties
 When you and Benny were only boys
 In Madison. I consecrate all the layers
 Of that last long evening before us.

5.
 You came back South for that end.
 Half your life in the city, never stopped
 To drive, arrived here broken up
 And lost to us by bus that season.
 I did not dream a solid darkness
 Had brought you home. The fresh words
 Gone, the wild ache of new books faded
 To your shelves. I did not dream all
 The blank stares had come for you;
 The quiet distance had come for you.

6.
 You went to the gazebo. The pistol
 Had the mass of stars. Words came.
 You were sick then, tired, innocent
 For your life of hurting anyone, anything.
 You spoke to that clear pain. Night
 Had come soft and cool, and each star
 Held down the black and ending sky.
 You held the pistol up and fired.
 The shaken earth swayed close.

7.
 And now another winter, two years after
 You fell. A cold rain rests on Georgia,
 Sliding from the thicker oak trunks to moss
 And the red earth and a bed of leaves.
 There is no resurrection of your body here
 Today. Your ashes and their molecules
 Spin somewhere near me, and I remain
 Alive and broken, or not, as the day permits.
 My daughter you never met sips milk



By the January fire and calls to me.

8.

I praise the artlessness of your life,
Ray, that spring in your step, how
As you drank everyone around you grew
Steadily more wonderful. I praise old films
And the Brooklyn Dodgers, your command
Of trivia, genuine risk of real affection.
I praise memory and age and wisdom
For my own purposes, my other life.

9.

Listen to me, Ray: my anger has gone,
But it took my breath to drive past
Your unexpected act. I want to say
I live in your memory, but all sure
Things break down to light and ashes.
I want to say your voice endures
In my hands, that I am your witness
Against this life, that in my quiet days
I hear your deep laughter outside
My front door somewhere toward morning.

- Philip Lee Williams

Ravel In April

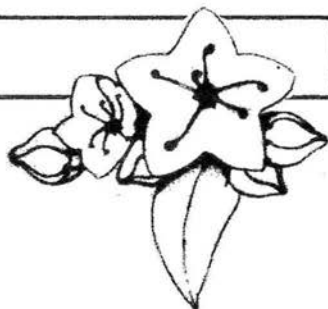
His delicate hands move the treetops
 Around in awakening green today,
 Raptors, bees, proud flat lizards out
 To hear the chuckling of woodwinds.
 He brings the swallowtails back home.
 All the singing is wordless, dogwoods
 Lift against the pressure of two oboes
 As if falling from this great height
 Held relief for the shuttering earth.

I feel migration in my slow movement.
 I cannot bear this damp unfolding
 Into new shapes or the old valedictory
 Flight. They break with me upon the sound
 Of sod dropped low upon a lid.

That dirge rests on other days.
 Now I see quite clearly what he meant
 By the sea and its folding white lips,
 The afternoon when nothing at all moves
 But a flake of butterfly, without wind.

-Philip Lee Williams

Memorial Day



1.

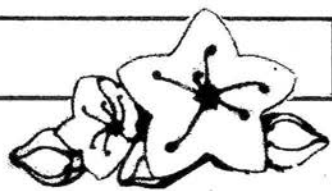
Do not forget to buy the cereal
On your way home, bran or oatmeal
In the economy size. And your pills,
Hon, go by and pick up your pills.
He charges out the door without the keys,
Decides to sit alone in the Buick
Rather than go back. The odor of jasmine
Comes through the open window. Verbena
Blooms in lavender and green.
He has forgotten the keys two times
This week already. His fingers flex
On that unturning wheel. He's dreamed
Of Malmady three nights running
And his brother Clyde, the oldest boy;
He's heard the fire, seen them all
Drop to the earth. Now that spring
Has eased from the branches of oak,
Now that poplar blossoms open
And fall softly on the car roof,
The shade disorients him. He cannot
Bear the kind insistence of flowers
Again. He cannot bear to go back
Inside, to tell her one more time.

2.

Oh, hon, that was so long ago
And wounds break us down alive
And dark, but you go on out.
We all dress and leave our beds.
She stands behind the curtain edge
So he cannot see her, hopes the car
Will strike its fire. When do you
Make the first discreet phone calls
Or bring him picture books, stop
The transit of old pretenses? She
Sees how quietly it all begins.
She will not dramatize the incidents
When she tells, just set it down
As one puts a baby in for sleep,
Tell his love for beer and ball

Has gone, that his rods and line
Wait amid the storage room dust
And debris. She wishes Florida might
Interest him again, how the sea lapped
Up the shingle of sand at its sunrise
Back when the children were so young.
Get out of that car, hon; no matter
Now and come back to me again.
I want you back with me again.

-Philip Lee Williams



There had always been a thousand chances to say it, he knew, but he had always been too afraid. Afraid of what? He asked himself as he stood there watching her laughing and smiling across the room full of people. There were nearly twenty people between him and her, perhaps twenty feet, a lovely tapestried sofa, and a man whose ring she wore on her finger that separated them at the moment. But, there had been a time when she had been only inches from him, with no walls, no people, no handsome, aspiring lawyer; there had only been silence then that had separated them...his silence. A few words, that was all it would have taken. He had seen what would have been her answer in her eyes that had waited so patiently, so hopefully for what he would never say.

A waiter with a tray of hors d'oeuvres stopped in front of him and offered strange culinary creations. Absently he reached for one, keeping his gaze locked on Anne. Her black dress shimmered in the soft light of candles that flickered on the table nearby, and he could see the same light glitter in the light blue eyes he had stared into so many an evening. He could hear her sweet laugh as it floated across the room and lingered there for a moment above him, as if to taunt him. That laugh had echoed so many times in his memory since the day she had said goodbye, tormenting him at night and chasing sleep far from him. Over and over he rehearsed words that he could never utter now, but that he could have, had he only realized what had been in his reach at the time. Perhaps time had made him wiser, or perchance seeing that something he had had once was now unattainable increased his desire. But, maybe, if he was honest with himself, he would see that what ate away at his heart every time he heard her name, or remembered the scent of her perfume, was that he loved her.

"Jonathan, I didn't know you were back in town," came a once-familiar voice behind him. Turning to see whose hand had hit him on the back, he found an old college friend who he had heard was married now with a couple of children.

"Rob, what's it been? Eight years? It's good to see you, old man," he teased his friend. Noticing that there was slightly more of Rob these days, he wondered if married life suited the once resolute bachelor.

"You, too, Jonathan. How's business these days?" he questioned, but it was easy to see the real question lay unasked and Jonathan chose not to answer it, perhaps because he had no answer.

"Oh, well enough, I suppose. And you?" he hated small talk, but it was a safe wall to hide behind and it kept that hung in the air no more substantial than that.

"Things are going quite well. The wife and I--she's standing right over there talking with Anne--we just moved into a new house up on Twelfth Street, you remember, the one with the green roof. The kids are getting bigger and we thought we needed more room. You ever find yourself a pretty little girl to settle down with?" His question was only leading up to what Jonathan knew

was inevitable. He felt himself take a deep breath as if he were about to plunge into a bottomless abyss.

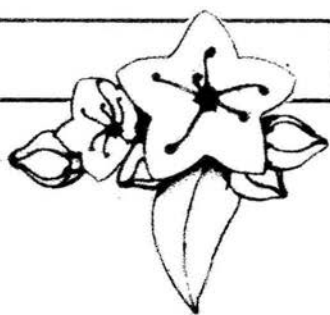
"No...no, I suppose my work has become my first priority and there just hasn't been time for anything...or anyone...so far," he said stiffly; it was an incredibly huge lie and he gritted his teeth as he spoke the words. His work meant very little and there was enough time in his life to keep a harem busy. If he could only tell the truth, it would be so simple. If he could only shout out to the whole crowd that there was only one woman in the world that could ever hold his heart, and that he had realized that truth too late and yet would do anything humanly possible to fix that. The words that screamed in his brain he drowned in a glass of champagne.

His eyes drifted over the heads of the people who stood between him and the woman who held his whole existence in her hands and yet was so completely unaware. She stood there, smiling, graceful, happy, oblivious to the turmoil in his soul. Rob had drifted away to talk with someone more interesting and Jonathan was left alone to watch the guests at Anne's party swirling around her as if she were the queen of the ball, as she should be. Standing here, observing the festivities, he was as detached from it all as if he were merely watching a play.

He watched as the lawyer he had never met eased his way over to Anne. The handsome man casually slipped his arm around Anne's waist and whispered something in her ear that made her smile. Jonathan shut his eyes for a moment and opened them again to find Anne and her husband announcing to everyone the news that they were expecting a child in the spring. Amidst the clapping and cheering and toasts, Jonathan made his way towards the door. A doorman handed Jonathan's coat to him, and he slipped it on, but before he stepped out, he turned one more time and found Anne's eyes on him. It seemed like an eternity that they stood there, but was only a moment really. Only a few simple words had kept him from being the one who stood beside her, placing his arm about her waist. Or maybe it was more than that. Perhaps those words never existed. There was no such thing as "what might have been," or at least so he had been told. Yet, how could something that did not exist torment him so? And how could words he had never said echo in his memory? The night air was cold as he left the house, and he huddled down in the warmth of his coat. Snowflakes swirled around him, but he did not notice. He had had a thousand to chances to say those words, what he would give for only one of those now.

-Dara Lynn Whiddon

Untitled
-Stephen Graham



Unfit

a dirty, little, smiling face.
a shirt two sizes too small
to cover his full belly.
clothes never new
always second-hand.
little toes cramped
in a holey shoe.

a young mother struggling
to sling hash and go home at night
to cry.

Moneybags walks by.
TSK. TSK.
Call DFACS.
Unfit.

-Christi Dayton Queen



Forests and Gardens

To hear people say
That friendship is a tree
By the strength of its life
Makes me look at the forests with envy.

But jealousy vainly felt
For the love you impress
A rose it would be, dear,
Not so much more, nay, so much less.

Indescribable beauty it carries.
Premature elegance holds potential.
For brief blooming that is
A definite essential.

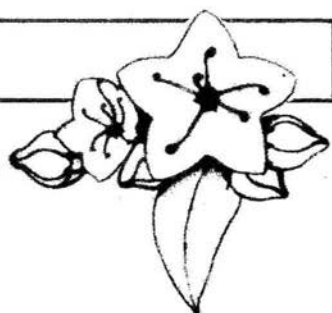
My heart with the wilting petals fall
A death too soon to miss
Its lost beautiful scent
Your lost lasting kiss.

Hold on too tightly
To a sentimental fate
And then your hands
Thorns lacerate,

I guard the dead rose garden
Covered by petals black of each rose.
How I wish sincerely
It was a forest I chose.

-Daniel Berryhill

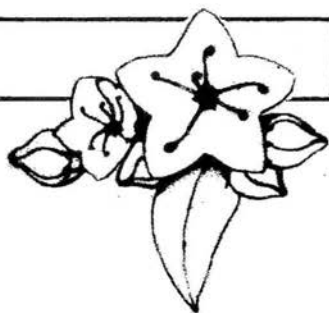
Untitled
-Jennifer Grant



Fall

This clear October moon
Hangs like a halo in blue-black cold
Pregnant with Promise
In a sky void of stars
And trace of cloud,
though yesterday I left my shoes out in the rain.
Their smooth and even skin
Was marked and scarred
before you rose to pull
them in
and polish up their wounds.
I have a feeling
this year winter will not come--
a sense of something blooming,
wild and
meant to yield strange fruit,
and that this slender lunar slice
defies the law of phase.

-Kelly Leach



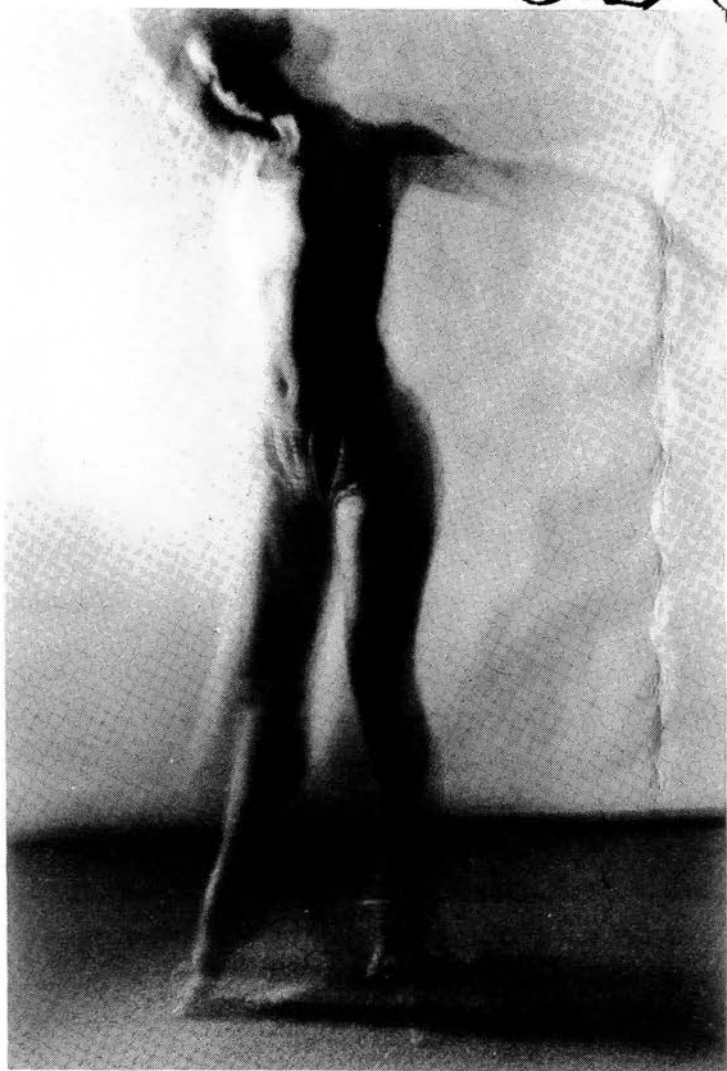
Just Before the Rain Falls

Heat rustles its way through the uneasy kine,
The vane wails like a banshee, jerking
North to south in forecast of something new.
One restless child, cheeks kissed by cool
Breezes, listens carefully to trees
As they rustle in opposition to stiff winds
That bend their aching branches.
Restless clouds scud, hushed and lowly
Across the graying sky
Moisture beads in agitated clouds
The child looks up
Moments later,
Drawn by a mother's call,
Seeking sanctuary
Just before the rain falls

-Adrienne Brooks



A Contour of Me
-Michelle A. Stefanik



A Different Dimension
-Jessica Chin Fong

No Matter If With Ease or Fight

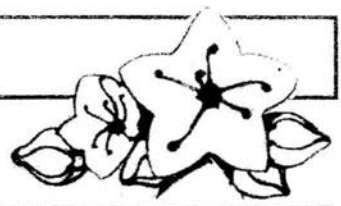
The worn and tattered leaves remain
Clinging to the trees,
Offered a most peaceful ride
Upon a gentle breeze.

Some accept the offer made,
And quickly loose their hold,
Believing life will follow death,
As they were always told.

And others, more determined yet,
Hold steadfast through all strife.
Certain that the breeze must mean
A final end to life.

No matter if with ease or fight,
Every leaf will fall.
The wind must claim its passengers,
Not one less than all.

-Pam Browning



Sullen
-Melissa Gravely

The Tractor

I had just smashed a mosquito between my finger and thumb when I heard Mother shriek from inside the house. I was thirteen and tall for eighth grade. I liked the sticky evenings after school when I could play basketball by myself on the driveway. I practiced lay-ups before dinner every night, imagining myself as the star forward on next year's high school team. While resting and swatting bugs, I heard Mom's scream as she came running out of the house, spatula in hand. I felt sure the house was on fire.

"It's your Uncle Roy," she breathed. "The tractor--"

Still holding the spatula, Mom cupped her hand over her mouth. I felt my blood pooling in my feet.

"No, Mom, it's okay," I hugged her hard.

Uncle Roy's tractor had always fascinated me. My brother and I always regarded it as our own giant steed, right there across the pasture. So big we had to get on Uncle Roy's shoulder to climb into the seat. And every time we did, we'd cheer and hoot while Uncle Roy would pretend he was the roar of the crowd.

But the huge tractor had always scared my mother. She said she had nightmares about the tractor's huge wheels rolling in a blur down the pasture's hill. She could never see who was in the seat, flipping over again and again. Even as Mom would laugh at my brother and me, as we hollered atop that great tractor, she would scold Uncle Roy for encouraging us. "Don't encourage them, Roy," she'd say. Uncle Roy would rub Mom's back and encourage us some more.

Mom was wiping the tears off her cheek with her shirt collar. She finally noticed the rusty spatula and let it fall on the driveway. "Oh, honey," she said, looking straight at me. "The tractor killed him."

I knew it had. Still, though, the actual words made my lips a little numb. I didn't cry; I couldn't. Instead I looked past my mother to the pasture connecting our house and Uncle Roy's. It was a hazy seven o'clock, and a gnat flew in my eye as I squinted at the roof across the way.

"Where's David?" I asked, knowing my little brother had been closer to Uncle Roy than even I had. He spent every Saturday afternoon with him—spreading hay for the cows, watching Uncle Roy's cable channels. Just a month before, David had gone coon hunting with Uncle Roy. Afterwards, Uncle Roy told Mom that David was a natural-born hunter.

"Where's David?" I asked again.

"He's in his room."

I left Mom on the driveway, alone in her checkered apron, and I went upstairs to find David. He was in a heap on his bed. I whispered his name and he started.



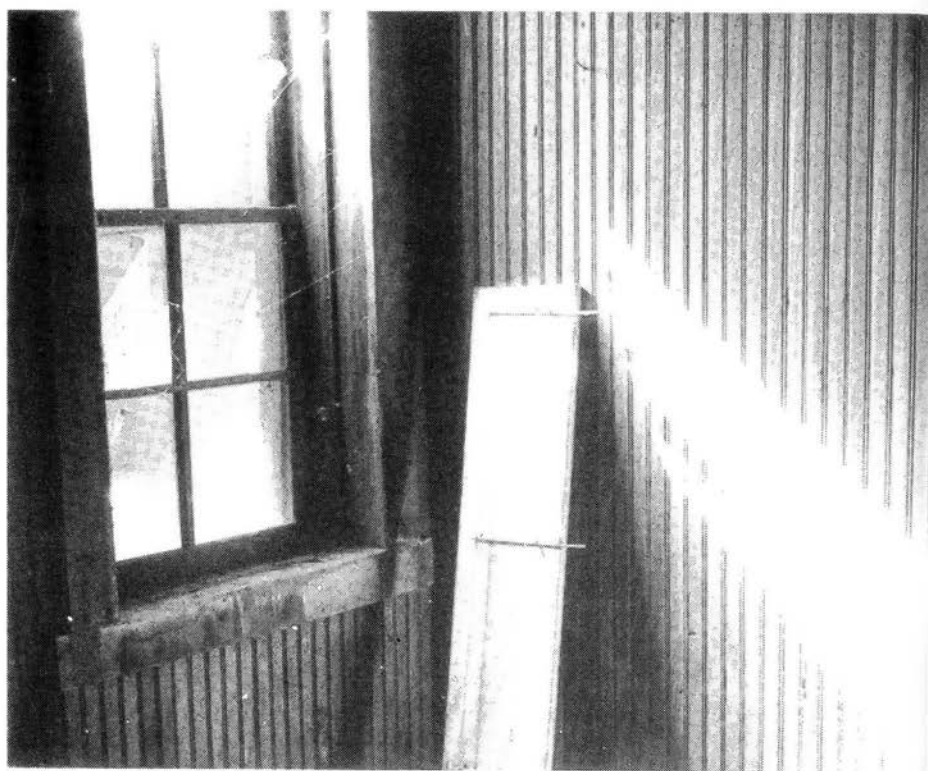
"David, come here," I smoothed his hair, sweaty from the heat and his sobbing, back from his forehead. I stared at him—I pressed his head against my chest so hard that my palms ached. I tried to cry; I squeezed my eyelids shut and whimpered. I opened my eyes and David looked up at me. His eyes were glassy. I hugged him again—I still wasn't crying.

That Friday we went to Uncle Roy's funeral. His body was in a closed casket because the tractor left marks even the mortician couldn't mask with dead person make-up. We each stood up and mumbled a few words about Uncle Roy, we sang "How Great Thou Art," and we ran back to the car before the casket was covered in the ground. Mom used to tell us if you ever heard the dirt being shovelled into somebody's grave, that person would be truly dead to you. We didn't want Uncle Roy to be dead.

Mother decided the tractor was too useful to get rid of, so we kept it in our barn. David and I swore we'd never look at our old steed again, and Mom told us that was fine. We just locked the barn doors till fall.

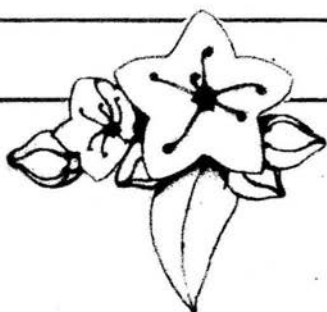
But when October came, and I was up in my room getting ready for basketball practice, I heard the old familiar sound of the tractor outside my window. I lifted the shade and peeked at the pasture. There was my brother, bouncing along and parting the high grass as he went. I watched for minutes, and then I heard David whoop and laugh as he drove faster and faster. The sun was falling behind the mountains, and I tried to yell for David to slow down. He couldn't hear me. I pushed my forehead against the window's screen and closed my eyes again. The tears came easily. I tried to picture the dirt hitting Uncle Roy's casket, but all I pictured was the big tractor, rolling again and again down the hill.

-Andrea Conarro



Reflections

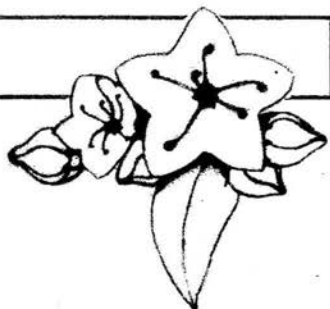
-Daniel Leuthner



White

My belly great with child,
I stumbled into you
at A & P
between the frozen foods
and eggs,
on new-waxed floor
with buggy marks.
Before I moved my slow and awkward
body from your view,
you turned, and in your eyes
surprise. It had been
months then--six to be exact--
since you and I had met.
I'd kept the child a secret,
wanting for
simplicity inside you
storm and vowing
that you'd never know
or reap the joy from
my travail.
Ironic,
that I touched you with it
as I raced around the aisle.
More ironic
that I let you
place your hand upon your son
as you fought tears
I'd never known
were yours.

-Kelly Leach



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-Kelly Leach



Untitled
-Amy Gradin



The Heirloom

"This is just another one of her schemes to break us up," she shrieked. "Why would I take something from her dresser?" she protested, violently tossing her shiny, sable hair from her pale face.

"She has been trying to break us up from the day we announced our engagement. Nothing is too loathsome for her." Her voice trembled as her brilliant black eyes darted across the room, her hands wringing an imaginary cloth.

"Isn't it obvious that she needs some kind of help? She wants to control you forever, and she will never share you with another woman." A heavy breath escaped her ruby lips as she turned to begin her return path across the floor. She drew three long, deep breaths before speaking again.

"You don't believe her, do you? Couldn't she have come up with anything more original than this? Really! Taking a family heirloom from her dresser. What a ridiculous story!" If you look through her room, I'm sure you'll find it hidden in a drawer somewhere."

Her pacing stopped suddenly in front of his chair. She knelt at his feet, took his hands in her long, thin fingers, leaned close to his face, and turned her fiery eyes upon his. Her chest heaved with each quivering breath.

"What do you plan to do about this? You must confront her." Her hot breath fell against his face. She turned quickly to follow his gaze that led to the object on the other side of her room.

"My jewelry box? You can't be serious!" she snarled, leaping to her feet and resuming the frantic pacing of a few moments earlier.

"I cannot believe you would take her seriously enough to doubt me. How can you plan to marry someone you don't trust?" Her voice rose through the scream, tears filling her eyes.

"Go ahead. Look," she said in a low voice, a long pale finger extended toward the box across the room. "You'll find nothing in there that is not mine."

Her pacing slowed, slowed again, and stopped as she intently watched him approach the jewelry box, open it, and close it.

"You see? I told you her precious heirloom was not there," she said barely audibly, still staring at his back.

He turned from the dresser to face her; their eyes met. Without looking away, he walked to her, tears filling his eyes. She held him in the biding stare until the first tears fell softly to his cheeks. She wiped the droplets away and kissed his cheeks softly where the tears had fallen. He began to speak, when she placed her finger to her lips, stopping him before he could begin.

"It's okay. I forgive you," she said softly, offering a faint smile.

He motioned toward the door, his eyes begging her permission to go.

"Come back as soon as it's settled," she said, lowering her eyes to release him at last.

He turned and left, quietly latching the door behind him. She heard him pause on the other side of the door before his footsteps trailed away.

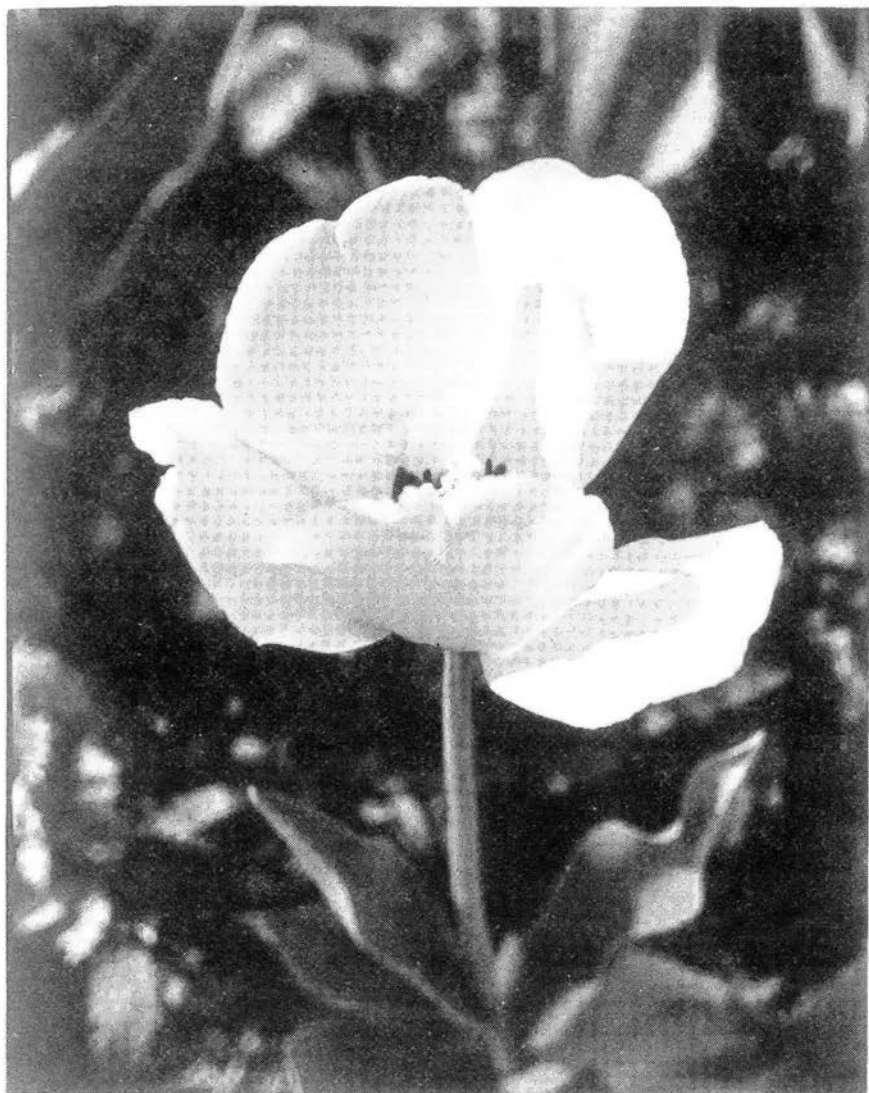
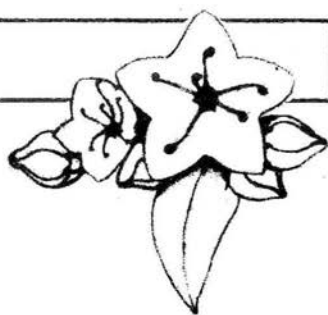
A faint smile curled the corners of her lips as she grasped the gold chain around her neck. She lifted it from beneath her sweater, revealing the hidden pendant. Without looking at the object, she wrapped her cold fingers around it and tore it from her neck, breaking the chain. She gently tossed it into the fireplace beside her.

The cameo shriveled at the touch of the flames, leaving only the worn chain clinging to the charred wood.

"Here comes the bride," she whispered melodiously. "Here comes the bride."

-Pam Browning

Untitled
-Debbie Martin



Meditation 21

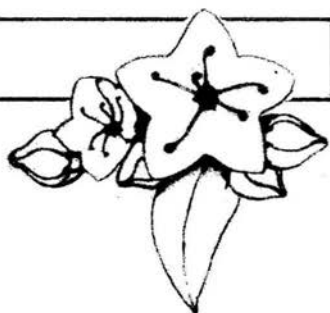
The masculine perimeter
Invisible though it be
Medieval armor can't compare
To unseen durability.
A boy gives up his human strength
To don the suit of manliness.
He'll lose humanity at length
Abstaining from all tenderness.
For manhood's iron garment keeps
His personality enclosed.
"Woe to the man who smiles or weeps
Or any weak emotion shows.
We deem him queer, worse than depraved.
Things too inferior for man
Are unto woman duly saved.
Adulthood's duty is to damn
Each man whose manifested mind
Pertaineth unto womankind."
These laws of masculinity
Which our world fondly inculcates
Our men with cruel tyranny
Determine ignominious fates.
These duties it assigns to men:
Conforming to a Father God
The image men were molded in,
But now how dreadful is this God!
Condemning fellow men to die
As offerings to Ares' knife,
Machining engines to defile
Our Mother Nature's laws of life,
Concocting drugs to win her throne
To rape Her when She's lost Her strength,
And quelling that which women own:
A spirit of most godly light.
She never gained from Adam's side
A comparable divinity.
No Milton! For healing men confide
With God whom they in women see.

-Ryan Wagner

Meditation 21

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 Medieval armor can't compare
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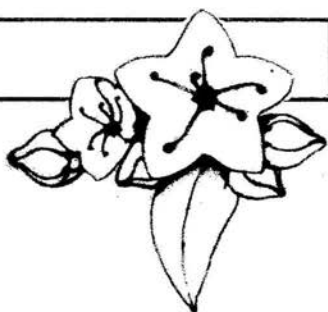
The Look
-Jason Smith

In Sight

How did you know the glasses
were not mine? I can see
beautifully without them, but
you're the first to ever notice
they only fog my world.

-Amy Singletary

Liza-Beth

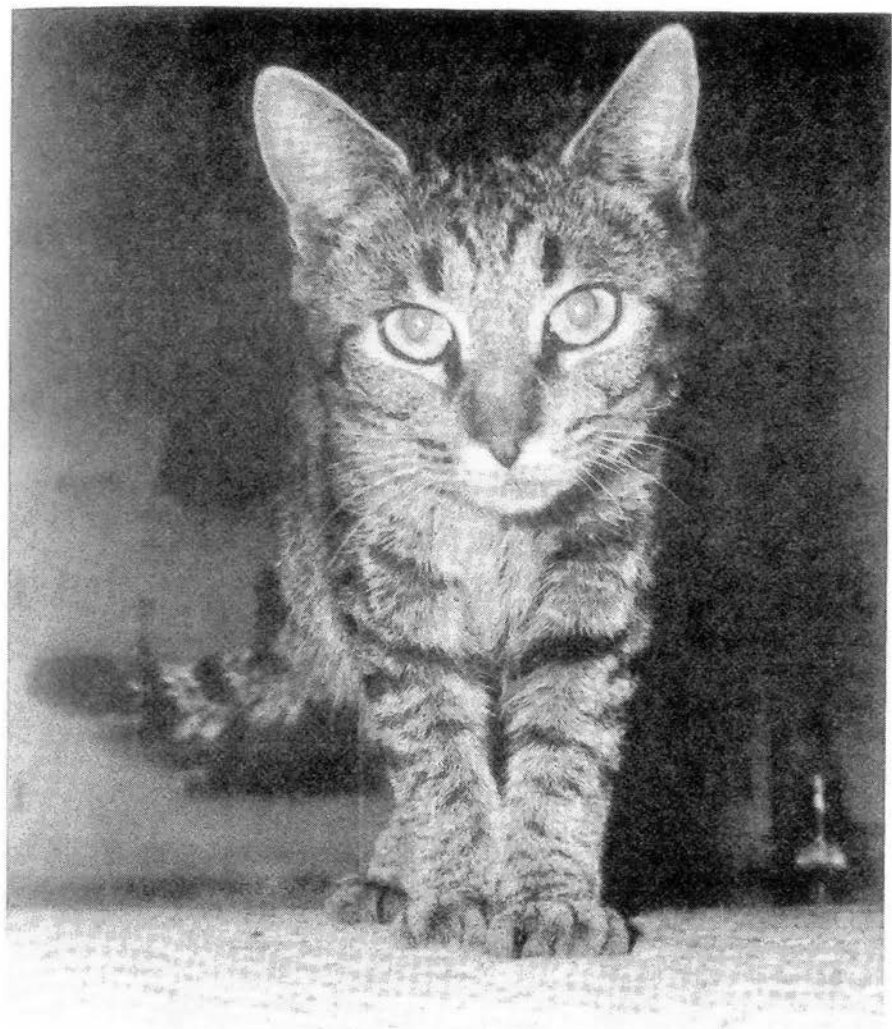
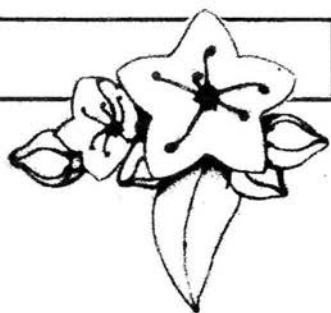


Old Mama Painter gripped her
handkerchief in gnarled hands
and half-heard the words
of Tom, her childhood friend.
The rough cedar box he'd fashioned
could not contain her Liza-Beth,
as if youth and vitality
could overcome death.
No matter how he twisted,
turned, and pushed,
her right leg would not go in,
stuck up in the air
in a macabre and fierce
denial of the truth,
the smallpox that had taken her
despite her love of life and drawn-out fight.
She was born on a stormy night,
the worst the little town of Sugarhill
had ever seen, and wouldn't soon forget.
The wind had torn the roofs from barns
and shook the little house
in which Liza-Beth emerged,
kicking and screaming,
announcing her birth.
The frightening fierceness of the lightning never left her
and she lived deep,
exactng all the joy from everything in life
A simple girl who could smell the snow
a day before it fell,
The one who tamed the town's wild horse
and dared the violence
of the river
to cool herself on days in June.
Now she would be
the wind in the leaves
above the harvest,
the first fall of snow,
white and pure,
the smell of spring at Easter
and the first tiny buds
that ventured forth from frozen ground.

She could never be contained
by man or what he made,
or even by boundary
between here and gone.
Her spirit was wild and floating
free, somewhere where dirt
and cedar boards weren't even known.
Ma Painter took a look at the sky
as Tom asked what to do.
"Should we build a bigger box?"
She sighed and said,
"Just put her in the ground."

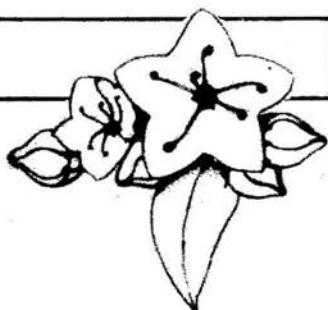
-Kelly Leach

Curiosity
-Chris Browning





Untitled
-Jo-Marie Like Karst



Smelling the season for a moment less ordinary, I feel alive.
I notice the sun and feel the breeze.
Gazing upon the green draped hills, I see the grand before me.
The constant changes sprout the colors of life.
I am blessed by the day to embrace the light.
I am soothed by night to hide beneath its light.
These two shades of brilliance, so alike yet so different, grant me comfort.
Never in my life have I taken such pause to understand meaning.
Odd it seems, how one must view the gifts of the grandest mother, in a moment less ordinary.
Without this moment we see, but we do not see.
For in this moment we see true, we see with our hearts.
Wonderful, if only for a moment less ordinary, we notice that we are alive.

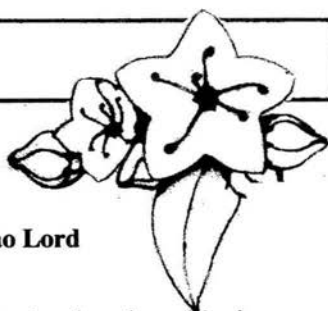
-Chad M. Swoszowski



Untitled
-Julia Mensink

Universal Culture: An Interview With Bette Bao Lord

-Dannie Leigh Chalk



In her recent speech at NGCSU, Bette Bao Lord, author of Spring Moon, remarked that she was uncertain why she had been asked to speak at a conference focusing on the role of women in war. Though her parents and grandparents fought in various conflicts, she herself has not been in a single military battle. Ms. Lord has, however, been fighting a much more difficult battle than bullets and grenades. She has struggled to create a fictional character who could be universally understood and still remain unique in the culture and traditions of China, her homeland. In 1982, Bette Bao Lord succeeded in her goal with the creation of the title character in her novel Spring Moon.

"The purpose [in writing Spring Moon] was to...make a Chinese character...who lives a completely different life [from that of any American]. Yet when you close the book, I wanted you to understand what her life was about. I wanted you to care for her. I wanted you to think that...had you been in her shoes, you might have done the same things, made the same choices. Don't look at Spring Moon as a strange person. She was born in [a different] time. She couldn't be the feminist of today...but within her life..., she dared to say anything...in the language that was within the boundaries. The real tragedy of [this novel] is that she was confined in [the garden] walls, and the only person who knew her, who appreciated her, was this half-uncle, who talked to her about other things."

Despite her long absences from her native country, Lord remains deeply influenced by her heritage. "When I was [in college], I didn't think it had a pull on me. You think that you make yourself, that you are the master of your destiny, that *you* are writing your life. And I think when you get older, you realize there are chapters there that...are written for you, in tradition, that you may never even have thought about."

Lord was particularly influenced by the Chinese belief that "less is more" in all aspects of life. This philosophy greatly figures into her style of writing.

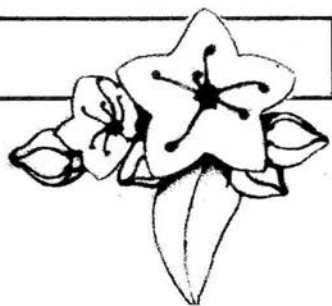
"Take a look at a Chinese painting. Most of it is left for [the viewer] to go into. My style is to write so that there is space. It's very sparse. I don't want to tell you [everything]. I want you to think about it. I'm a writer who would like to have each reader bring something [personal] to the book and [take something personal] from the book, rather than to say, 'Here, let me take you by the hand....' It's important to me that each reader read a different book...in Spring Moon."

In an effort to leave the readers free to formulate their own judgments, Lord tries to keep her own opinions from entering into the narrative. For

example, although the book is set during the Chinese Communist Revolution, Lord maintains her objectivity regarding Communism.

When questioned about her feelings on her homeland's government, however, she was not reticent in expressing herself. "I was more hopeful for China, that after they had been through the cultural revolution...the Party would want to reform itself. I've come to learn...that the Party probably is incapable of reforming. It changes the people that want to change it, rather than the other way around. I feel...much more saddened by the role of the Party today than I perhaps was [when Spring Moon was written]."

In letting the readers formulate their own judgments about the Revolution, Lord hopes that the moral implications that come with such violent actions will have an even greater impact. "[The revolutionaries] wanted fast answers, quick fixes. [Communism] seemed like a formula. In the end, it was about power, not ideals. When you have people who think ends justify the means, it's inevitable...that the violence that ensues is always...too high a price to pay. In the end, the people suffer for it."



my boy, leroy

i see the third grade door open at the ring of a bell
and ten thousand kids go running
from each single-file, in-anticipation formed lines
from all sides of the "pod," or whatever the fuck
they call that room, that building
with all its very many sexual and violent corners of the world
where i lost my grey watch to the kid who
smelled like mothballs soaked in bearing grease
and i had the balls
to use my weight, my monetarily elevated state
to make him cry when the teacher finally caught him
in his lie
he never wore that fucking watch again
and neither did i.
'cause i was too good to realize
the kids who chew lead paint off government housing walls
ain't got the fuck-what-clue-time-it-is
from - niacin, to.....2nd period cursive.

-Rick Church



Untitled
-Alicia Beasley



Rites Of Passage

For weeks, rain clouds obscured our little yellow star, shining like a diamond high above the mist and mud. Molly and John Schign huddled on their back porch under an umbrella; today was their son's first birthday.

As they smoked cigarettes, drank coffee, and gazed through the misty curtain into the back yard, John observed, "You know, Molly, when I stand here, it's as if I'm on a great ship, churning through the darkness toward a new world." John had a point. Their new double-wide trailer resembled a ship, long and wide.

"Little Jake has plenty of room to grow," John added, putting his arm around Molly.

Molly winced at the mention of Jake's development. She hesitated, then began slowly, her green eyes clouded with worry, "At the Hairport today, Connie asked me if Jake had walked yet. When I told her that he hadn't, She said, 'Honey, that boy ought to be walkin' by now.'"

"What did you say?" John asked.

"I told her that I had read all the books, and I wasn't worried," Molly said.

"Good," John said in a halting manner, indicating the end of the conversation.

"But then," Molly continued, "Connie said she didn't know books from toilet paper; she knew about real life, and Jake ought to be walking." Molly paused, then asked, "John, did you play any sports in high school?"

"Just basketball," John answered in a confused tone. "Why?"

"Connie said a father's abilities can be inherited. Connie's husband, Bill, was a gymnast in high school, and his son practically came somersaulting out of her womb."

John reacted as if he were jackslapped, coughing half his coffee and his cigarette into the yard. Gasping for air, he regained his composure and thundered, "Bill wasn't a gymnast in high school! He tried out for the team, but when he did a split, he pulled his hamstring, and flopped around on the floor like a wounded bass!" John paused, gathering patience, "Listen, Molly, let's not talk about this now; we have enough problems. Our backyard is quicksand, and in two hours, we'll have sixty guests."

"This morning, the dog sank up to his neck in mud over there," Molly said, pointing to a spot near the porch. Molly knew it was time for a diversion. She had handled Jake's first year fairly well, but John, as yet, hadn't fully adjusted to the exotic pressures of parenthood.

"Quicksand!" John was mumbling. "I told that damn bulldozer driver to pack the trailer pad," John said, rubbing his pulsing temples with his fingertips.

A "pad" is the earthen foundation of a trailer, ten to fifteen feet high. Now, when it rained, the pad turned to soft, deep mud, especially near the kitchen end of the trailer.

Suddenly, the whole trailer shook, slowly at first, then picking up speed until the entire trailer was bouncing wildly.

"My God! What was THAT?" John cried.

"I told you a week ago the trailer was vibrating during the spin cycle, John," Molly answered.

"I knew it was vibrating," John said. "I didn't know it was bucking like a mechanical bull!"

Amid all the commotion, the couple didn't hear the pitter patter of little feet followed by the soft bump of a diapered bottom hitting the floor coming from the den, just beyond their sight.

The party was going well. The children played in the kitchen with Jake. Their laughter brightened the atmosphere as the adults gathered into groups and talked.

Then, as John watched, Molly and Connie paired off to talk. John saw Connie talking to Molly while pointing to Jake, who was playing between his cousins. John couldn't hear their conversation, but Molly bowed her head and nodded as Connie prattled on, making wildly exaggerated hand gestures, her huge hair bobbling with every syllable. John felt the anger well up inside of him.

"Hey Buddy!"

John turned and saw Bill, Connie's husband.

"Just the man I want to see!" John spitted venomously, his tone turning all heads in the room.

"How you doing, Buddy?" Bill said a little defensively, picking up John's tone.

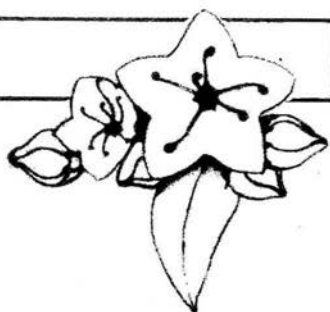
"Not good, Bill, not good. It seems, according to your wife, that I'm unwittingly giving faulty genetic material to my son," John said, glaring at Bill with clenched fists.

The room fell silent, except for the ticking of rain on the roof. The awkward moment was broken by a sudden climax of screams from the kitchen.

"Come quick everybody; Jake's walking!" the children screamed.

The guests stampeded to the kitchen, partly to see Jake's first steps and partly to escape the tension of John's and Bill's confrontation.

About that time, as if set in motion by some cruel hand of fate, the washing machine clicked into the spin cycle. Like a choo-choo train, the trailer began to bounce slowly. The guests tried hard not to notice the vibration, but that became impossible as the bouncing intensified and the weight of sixty extra people in the kitchen caused the trailer to warp off the concrete support blocks and slide down through the mud pad, bumping the ground as if it were on tracks, landing softly like a diapered bottom, then neatly splitting into its original two long halves.



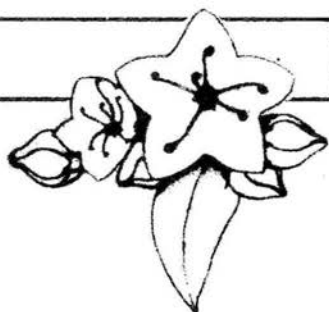
Although there was never any real danger, inside the kitchen the guests screamed and scrambled for their footing as the floor shifted angles and the half of the double-wide opposite the kitchen tumbled down the hill out of sight, revealing the sky.

It was as if a curtain had lifted. The guests were not hurt, and, blinking like newborns, they gazed up into the sky that had suddenly cleared, reigning impossibly blue over the scene. As John and Molly gazed through the gaping hole that was once a side of their house, they thought of many things, things such as insurance, a lawsuit, Jake's first steps, and houses with real foundations. As they tried to make sense of the catastrophe, both of the parents shared a sense of the wonder at the road that lay before them, long and double-wide.

-Kirk Turner



Mockery
-Jason Ross



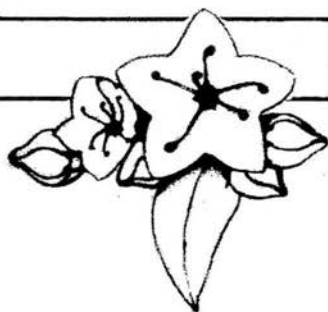
Renaissance

Someday I will break these ties
That trap me in my past mistakes,
And throw off others' twisted molds
Of how I should have been, and then,
The real me will come springing out
All fresh and wicked-green
To dance upon the grave of this
Unsightly pawn you think is me.

-Kelly Leach



Untitled
-Benjamin Schiff



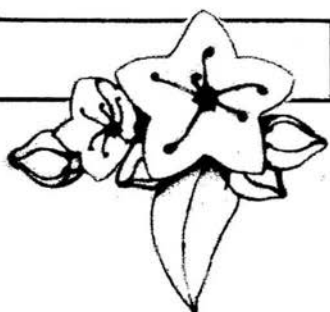
XLV

Sensuous bodies flail
To the blinding beat
Of an insistent strobe.
Spinning out of control,
I look to find
An acknowledging face
But they are all
Entranced
By the primitive calling
Of each other's dance.
The music grows
Ever wilder
Sending its captured victims
On an insane journey
To keep with
The pounding rhythm.
Twisting together
In an estranged orgy,
Lovers,
Love, then hate, then love once more...
All spawned by
Movement's ecstasy.

-Suzanne E. Sheldon



Untitled
-Jessica Chin Fong



Fears, Blood, and Tears

Answer my one question, son.
Which is it you most fear
Shedding your blood for many
Or for one, to shed a tear?

The former would be your choice,
But I tell you frank, my son
I'd rather shed my blood in vain
Than to shed a single tear for one.

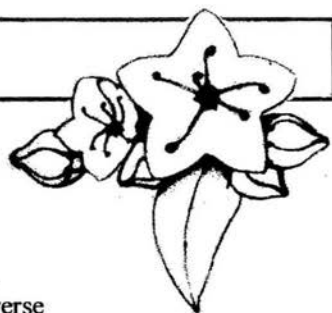
Both are so promptly shed
And creep down your skin,
But to weep leaves a harder wound to heal
And are void from the sight of men.

Feel fortunate, my good son.
Some men have not what you have here.
The greatest sufferers of men
Are those who can't shed a tear.

-Daniel Berryhill



King
-Megan Smith



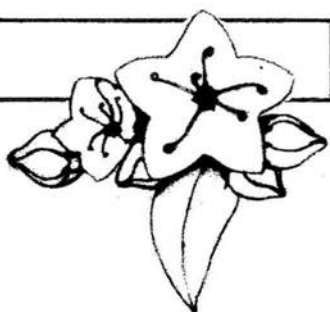
Meditation 22

Lobelia, Aster, Coreopsis,
Grow petaled carpets more diverse
Than works of any human artist.
They shed the gold for bees wings to disperse
Throughout the open woodland meadows
Encircled by great oaks and hickories
Which roar in chorus as the wind blows.
More venerable than all other trees,
These rough-barked mothers drop a mast crop
That nourishes the game which hunters prize.
This wood which grows o'er spring and hilltop,
Throughout which I, its guard, keep watchful eyes,
Stands under siege by those descendants
Of hungry Eristhichion.
They lust with blasphemous impatience
To pave, construct, or mine upon
The woods and farmlands that have fed them,
But by Hephaestus' artifice,
Electricity, technology's gem,
The fire that saves forests doth suffice
To satisfy their need for firewood.
This forest rests secure from such a fate
As falling prey as saw's or stove's food.
My silent vigil turns elate
While gazing through the leafy curtains
Which drape the limbs of hornbeam stands
Upon the bounding otter kittens.
I lie upon the river's sands.
A river with the rarest fishes,
It never tastes the cattle's dung
Nor flows immured in planners ditches,
But one day its protective forest
Shall die when wheel-footed glass-faced beasts
Gouge lifeless patches through the forest.
For human growth is loathe to cease
It's fruitful lust to multiply
And sentence other living things to die.

-Ryan Wagner



Underestimated
-Laura Dunn



Words

As I speak
Take these lips
And these words
Under your tongue
To taste their
Validity and truth.
Know my thoughts;
Hear my soul
Speak to you
Through my words
And feel the
Implied forever
Within them.
I give them
To you.

-Kasi Whitaker

TV Guide

It's the tv that deadens me. I can't think through the laugh tracks and pseudo reality. I become the characters and lose me somewhere in their falsity. It's so much easier not to be me. So much easier to pretend that everything's peachy and fixable in a thirty minute time slot. But Mr. Brady never shows up with words of wisdom when I need him and Drs. Green and Carter don't have the skill to patch up my holes. So, I sit and stare at that overpriced plastic box and wait to be consumed by its timeless characters and plots.

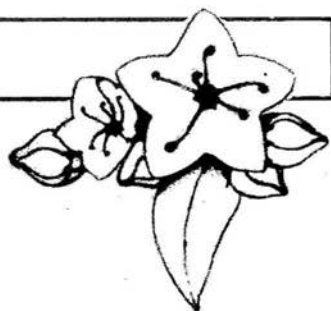
I know, in those late nights, why lonely housewives weigh three hundred pounds and love their greasy chips more than their husbands. I know that I'm in danger of someday falling into the same rut, and I know that if I did, I would end up the same as those women-dead at seventy-three from a massive fat related coronary, cold in my own overpriced but specially made box and surrounded by people who meant very little to me, all restlessly awaiting the following reception given at my home which is cleaner without me than it ever was with me.

Knowing this, I wonder why I don't ever get up, why I don't just go. Go somewhere, anywhere, it doesn't matter. It would be that first step, the step that would invariably lead to discovering myself and subsequently, to a happy life that would make me beautiful, skinny, successful, and fulfilled.

Even if I believed in the power of that first step and my dreams, I don't think I would actually lift my numb butt from the chair and begin that journey. I watch John Travolta strut with paint and Tony grow closer to Angela and Zack take advantage of Mr. Belding and Alan Alda make death funny and Ricki Lake and Ricki Lake and Ricki Lake and, oh God, I'm going to throw up fat black and white women crying about their deadbeat boyfriends before I ever leave this chair.

Something inside sobs at my own pathetic life, while I long for some place to be where I know that I will feel. Just feel, feel real emotions and true being. I want to breathe trueness, wallow in the steamy shower of existing within and without myself. I want to savor the exhaust that puffs into my face as I walk behind the city bus that's brought me to this place and laugh at the pink cotton candy bubble gum that sticks to the worn soles of my year-old sandals. I crave the swirl of my tie-dyed skirt around my slightly bristly legs and the wind that swings though my already mussed hair. I want to live my life like a song, one of those upbeat but soul-squishing ballads that makes me cry because I want to and I can and it makes me happy and everything just a little bit brighter. And I don't even consider my puffy eyes or dazed appearance because no one else does. I'm just a vibrant piece of moving scenery, only noticed when I so choose to be. And living in spite of it all.

And just as this notion comes splashing down over me, and I begin to notice a rejuvenating tingling in my butt, and my fingers determinedly grip the



fuzzy arms of the recliner, a familiar jingle comes dancing into my brain, pierces my resolve and whispers, "start it all tomorrow." Just wait a little longer, until I've reseen this show and had a chance to get a drink. And Bill Cosby laughs his way into the Huxtable household and I drift back into the tv, settle further into the chair that knows my geography better than I do. And I drift away into the haze that feels so familiar. One more time.

-Amy Singletary

Notes on Contributors

Guest Contributor

Philip Lee Williams is the author of eight published novels, the latest being The True and Authentic Adventures of Jenny Dorset. He has won a number of awards, including the Townsend Prize, and was named Georgia Author of the Year in Fiction in 1991. A documentary film he wrote and co-produced recently won a Finalist's Award in the New York Film and Video Festival. He is also a widely-published poet, with appearances in Poetry, the Kentucky Poetry Review, and Poem, among many others. His essays have appeared in magazines and books. He lives in Oconee County, Georgia, with his wife, Linda, and their children, Brandon and Megan. (pp. 15-20)

Student Contributors

Alicia Beasley is a contributing artist. (p.54)

Daniel Berryhill is from Macon, Georgia, and is currently a freshman at NGCSU. He is a member of the Corps of Cadets under the Bravo company, and he is a member of the Rifle Marksmanship Team. He has had an interest in poetry since he was fifteen, preferring classical poetry over modern day poetry. (p. 26)

Adrienne Brooks is a senior biology major from Cartersville, Georgia. This was her first attempt at such a contest, and she's honored to have been chosen for the review. (p. 29)

Chris Browning has always had a love for photography, but he is just now a first quarter photography student. He believes photographs capture the essence of life that all too often passes by in fleeting moments. (p. 47)

Pam Browning is an undergraduate student majoring in English and minoring in Professional Writing and Mass Communication. She is originally from Michigan and now resides in Dahlonega with her husband, Todd, and her daughter, Emma. (pp. 1, 32, 39-40)

Rick Church is a junior art major at NGCSU. His hobbies aside from poetry include bareback horse riding, glass blowing, synchronized swimming, and talking on the phone with Dionne Warwick. (pp. 6, 53)



Andrea Conarro graduates this June with an English degree. She will spend next year volunteering her fresh-out-of-college skills in some underprivileged nook of society; she hopes she'll also have more time to improve her writing. (pp. 34-35)

Michael Deems is a contributing artist. (p. 10)

Laura Dunn is a contributing artist. (p. 66)

Jessica Chin Fong was born in Glencove, New York, on July 30, 1979. She was brought up in Venezuela and is currently a student at NGCSU. (pp. 31, 62)

Amy Gradin is a Fine Arts Major at NGCSU with an emphasis in photography. She enjoys teaching dance and studying the medieval arts. (p. 38)

Stephen Graham is an Art Marketing Major from Griffin, Georgia. He plans on commissioning in the U. S. Army in December 1998. (p. 23)

Jennifer Grant is an Art Education major graduating in December 1998. She enjoys traveling abroad and the richness of daily life. (p. 27)

Melissa Gravely is an Industrial Design major, completing her degree at Georgia Tech. Her greatest photography interest is children. (p. 33)

Bobby and Karen Hall are contributing artists. (p. 7)

Jo-Marie Like Karst says that, when young, the longleaf pine of Georgia lives close to the ground and safe from fire, surrounded by pine needles, spending most of its energy sending a tap root deep into the ground to obtain water and minerals. When older, after the tap root is well established, the tree launches upward, rapidly growing to reach a height above the danger of fire and survives for generations....so is her life. (p. 48)

Kelly Leach is convinced that there is beauty in each one of us. To all of those who have inspired her, "I want to be that complete...to touch the light, the heat I see in your eyes." (pp. 13, 28, 37, 45-46, 59)

Daniel Leuthner is a senior Art Marketing major. He enjoys photography and plans to work internationally after graduation. (p. 36)

Ester Lipscomb is a contributing artist. (p. 25)

Debbie Martin, who lives in Gainesville, is a senior majoring in Art Marketing with a concentration in graphic design and layout. She has worked on the student newspaper, the *Voice*, and the NGCSU Cyclops yearbook staff. Her favorite art media are computer graphics, painting, and photography. (p. 41)

Julia Mensink left her home in Groningen, the Netherlands, to come to NGCSU in September 1997. She enjoys taking art classes, playing on the tennis team, and exploring "the American way of life." After spring quarter, she will go back to the Netherlands and study business in Amsterdam. (pp. 3, 50)

Terese Marie Pauksta, from Lilburn, Georgia, is a sophomore English major. "Franki" is honored that her first entry is worthy of this acclaim. (p. 14)

Christi Dayton Queen, a native of the North Georgia mountains, is majoring in English Education and plans to graduate fall 1998. Some of her favorite pastimes are writing, reading, and spending time with her two children and husband. (pp. 4, 24)

Jason Ross is taking his first photography class. The boxer (in his photograph) is great at showing moods and loves the camera. (p. 58)

Benjamin Schiff is a contributing artist. (p. 60)

Suzanne E. Sheldon feels that as a carbon-based life form she is too complex to be thoroughly described in two sentences. However, if this intrigues you, she will be more than glad to elaborate on the subject. (p. 61)

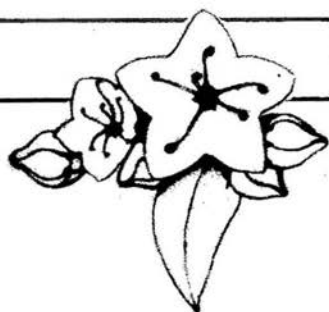
Justin O. Shelton is a member of the Blue Ridge Rifles and Pi Kappa Phi. He dedicates his writing to his true love Amanda. (pp. 8-9)

amy singletary is a freshman majoring in french, she likes to write with blue ink pens and old-fashioned quill sets, she's heavily influenced by an overdose of fairy tales from her childhood, and she wants to be ee cummings when she grows up. (pp. 44, 68-69)

Jason Smith is a Business major at NGCSU. He is a commuter who enjoys the outdoors. (p. 43)

Megan Smith is a contributing artist. (p. 64)

Michelle Stefanik is an Art Marketing major with a passion for art that gifts her with the love and patience she feels necessary in creating artwork. She praises



God for the talents He has given her, and she gives any and all praise to Him.
(p. 30)

Chad M. Swoszowski is a twenty-five year old political science major. Best advice: What the mind of man can conceive and believe, he can achieve!
(p. 49)

Cory Truelove is a senior Art Marketing student with an interest in graphic design and illustration. After graduating from North Georgia, he plans to attend the Portfolio Center in Atlanta, where he will further his education in commercial art. (p. 5)

Kirk Turner is an Atlanta native and naval veteran. Currently, he is living with his family in Auraria, Georgia, where he observes the decline of American society on "MSNBC Daily." (pp. 55-57)

Dara Lynn Whiddon is a sophomore at NGCSU who enjoys reading, writing, and tennis. She hopes to teach English on the college level. (pp. 21-22)

Kasi Whitaker is a freshman at NGCSU from Snellville, Georgia, and she plans to major in Criminal Justice. She plays on the Lady Saints softball team; she reads and writes in her spare time. (pp. 2, 67)

Ryan Wagner is a senior majoring in biology and minoring in math. To him, writing is not only a pleasure but a spiritual necessity, for he is abundantly inspired during the time he spends outdoors collecting specimens. (pp. 11, 42, 65)

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